

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02829 122140 Z

64

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

CU-04 IO-12 AID-20 SY-07 USSS-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-11

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R 121620 Z MAR 73

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1044

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2829

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJ: AUB STUDENT SUPPORT OF KHARTOUM OPERATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: AUB CAMPUS PAPER HAS ARTICLE INDICATING APPROVAL OF KHARTOUM TRAGEDY. AMBASSADOR HAS SPOKEN TO ADMINISTRATION, WARNING OF DANGER OF RADICAL PALESTINIAN MOVE TO TAKE OVER STUDENT BODY AND MAKING IT VERY CLEAR THAT EXPRESSIONS OF RADICAL SENTIMENT SUCH AS APPROVAL OF KHARTOUM KILLING COULD HAVE SERIOUS, NEGATIVE EFFECT ON FUTURE AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR AUB. THEREFORE IT INCUMBENT UPON ADMINISTRATION FIND MEANS CURTAIL EXTREMISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICIAL WEEKLY STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT BEGINS ITS FRONT PAGE LEAD ARTICLE IN MAR 9 EDITION AS FOLS:

" ALTHOUGH ' OPERATION KHARTOUM ' IS OVER, IT WILL TAKE A MUCH LONGER TIME FOR ITS EFFECTS TO COOL DOWN. ALTHOUGH THE MAIN AIM OF THE OPERATION WAS NOT ACHIEVED, STILL, A LOT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. ' OPERATION KHARTOUM ' WAS THE FIRST DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS AND THE USA."

2. ARTICLE WAS SUBJ OF UNFAVORABLE PRIVATE COMMENT OVER THE WEEKEND, EVEN BY ONE PALESTINIAN, NOTING THAT FREEDOM OF EX-
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02829 122140 Z

PRESSION HAS BEEN CARRIED TOO FAR WHEN AUB STUDENT ORGAN RESPONDS WITH WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY MEANT AS APPROVAL OF ASSASSINATION OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS AND IS PERMITTED BY UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION TO DO SO.

3. AMBASSADOR PHONED ACTING PRESIDENT OF AUB, DEAN SWENSON, MAR 12 AND SAID HE CONSIDERED EDITORIAL OUTRAGEOUS, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT APPEARED IN OFFICIAL STUDENT ORGAN OF AUB. AMBASSADOR SAID HE CONSIDERED DRASTIC REMEDIAL ACTION REQUIRED AND ASKED TO BE ADVISED OF WHAT STEPS UNIVERSITY CONTEMPLATES TAKING.

4. SWENSON SENT DEAN OF STUDENTS NEJAIMI TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH AMBASSADOR AFTERNOON MAR 12. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT BOTH PERSONALLY AND AS REPRESENTATIVE OF USG HE FOUND LEAD ARTICLE IN CAMPUS PAPER SHOCKING. MOREOVER, AT TIME WHEN USG MAKING IT CLEAR TO ARAB GOVTS THAT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM WILL BE INFLUENCED BY THEIR POSITION ON TERRORISM, AUB SHOULD BE AWARE OF IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FROM UNITED STATES SHOULD IT APPEAR THAT STUDENT BODY HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THOSE ADVOCATING EXTREMIST TACTICS. AT PRESENT TIME, AUB TRUSTEES MEETING IN NEW YORK TO DISCUSS MEANS OF COPING WITH SEVERE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. UNFORTUNATELY ONE CANNOT EXPECT THAT SITUATION IN AREA WILL IMPROVE RAPIDLY AND MORE TERROR AND EXTREMISM MUST BE ANTICIPATED. THEREFORE AUB ADMINISTRATION MUST MOVE QUICKLY TO COPE WITH PROBLEM BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND.

5. DEAN NEJAIMI SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD PROBLEM AND REMARKED THAT RECENTLY PRESIDENT OF STUDENT COUNCIL (DAJJANI), WHO ELECTED ON PRO- FATAH SLATE BUT WHO HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH ADMINISTRATION, HAS BEEN ENCOUNTERING FOR FIRST TIME SERIOUS OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN COUNCIL. FOR EXAMPLE, EDITOR OF STUDENT PAPER HAD BEEN ASKED BY DAJJANI TO RESIGN (PRIOR TO MAR 9 EDITION) BUT RESIGNATION HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED. NAJAIMI AGREED THAT IT ESSENTIAL FOR AUB TO FACE SQUARELY THREAT OF INCREASING RACICAL-IZATION OF STUDENTS. HOWEVER, DIRECT CONFRONTATION OF STUDENTS BY AUB ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE LIKELY, AS HAS BEEN CASE IN PAST, PLAY INTO HANDS OF RADICALS WHO CONTINUALLY STRESS THEME THAT AUB TAKES DIRECT ORDERS FROM USG VIA OUR EMBASSY HERE. NEJAIMI SAID HE WOULD WORK WITH FACULTY ADVISOR TO CAMPUS PAPER AND "RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR" OF PAPER TO EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS, INCLUDING EDITOR, THAT PAPER CANNOT RPT NOT BE USED AS POLITICAL ORGAN:
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02829 122140 Z

AND THAT TO DO SO COULD JEOPARDIZE EXISTENCE OF UNIVERSITY

AND SO COULD NOT BE PERMITTED. NAJAIMI SAID THAT IF EDITOR DID NOT HEED THIS ADVICE, SERIOUS CONSIDERATION WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE GIVEN TO DISCONTINUING PAPER.

6. AMBASSADOR URGED NEJAIMI DO WHATEVER NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR, NOW AND IN FUTURE, JUST WHERE AUB STANDS ON THIS SORT OF QUESTION AND ALSO TO DEAL WITH WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE GROWING CHALLENGE FROM STUDENT (AND OFF- CAMPUS) EXTREMISTS. NEJAIMI SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST AND WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH.

7 COMMENT: A) THIS EPISODE IS ONE MORE, AND PERHAPS MOST REPREHENSIBLE, PIECE OF EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING STRENGTH WITHIN STUDENT MOVEMENT AT AUB OF PALESTINIAN RADICALS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS. RECENT ESCALATION OF FEDAYEEN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES PLUS ISRAELI SHOOTING DOWN OF LIBYAN AIRCRAFT HAVE ENABLED PALESTINIAN RADICALS ONCE AGAIN HEAT UP STUDENT OPINION AFTER MORE THAN YEAR OF RELATIVE CALM ON CAMPUS.

B) " SPEAKERS CORNER" PREVIOUSLY INFAMOUS FROM APPEARANCES BY LEILA HADDAD CONTINUES SERVE AS FREE FORUM FOR MILITANT VIEWS. APPEARANCE THERE ON MAR 9 OF ONE OF FATAH LEADERS IDENTIFIED WITH TERRORIST ACTIVITIES (ABU HASSAN), COMBINED WITH ONE- DAY SYMPATHY STRIKE ON BEHALF BSO TERRORIST ABU DAOUD DEMONSTRATES EXTENT TO WHICH PALESTINIAN MILITANTS ARE AGAIN DEMINATING STUDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. WHEREAS ONE POINT LAST YEAR WE FOUND SOME HOPE, IN FACT FATAH ELEMENTS APPEARED GAIN UPPER HAND OVER PFLP ON CAMPUS, WE ARE CONCERNED OVER EXTEND OF CURRENT IDENTIFICATION OF FATAH WITH BLACK SEPTEMBER, AND INCREASING EXTREMIST TENDENCIES SHOWN BY MOST PALESTINIAN MILITANTS. THE MORE MODERATE STUDENT LEADERS MAY BE OVERRUN BY RADICALS. WE SHALL WATCH SITUATION OF AUB CLOSELY AND REPORT ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.
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